



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 4, 2009

Maine Rejects Same-sex Marriage

As Maine goes, so stands Rhode Island. Until yesterday, tiny Rhode Island was the only one of the six New England states to hold out against what some call "marriage equality" and others oppose as a desecration of marriage and family values. But on Tuesday, Maine went to the polls and repealed a law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor last spring that made marriage gender-neutral state law.

Adam and Eve could be Adam and Steve if a same-sex couple were to apply for a marriage license in Maine.



But defenders of traditional marriage went out and got more than 100,000 signatures within 45 days of the signing of the law by Governor John Baldacci to put the question on the ballot. About 53 percent of those participating in yesterday's referendum voted in favor of Question 1, which was to reject extending marriage to same-sex couples, while allowing religious groups the option of refusing to perform such weddings. As a result, weddings of some same-sex couples who planned to marry after the law would have taken effect on January 1 have been unceremoniously cancelled.

"I'm ready to start crying," Cecilia Burnett, a 58-year-old massage therapist, told the Associated Press, as she and her partner, Ann Swanson, walked out of the ballroom at a Holiday Inn in Portland, Tuesday night after learning that the "Yes" vote carried the day on the question of whether to repeal the new same-sex marriage law. "It hurts. It hurts personally," Burnett said. "It's a personal rejection of us and our relationship, and I don't understand what the fear is." But the opponents of same-sex marriage were celebrating the latest victory in the battle to keep marriage defined as it has been for centuries and millennia.

"The institution of marriage has been preserved in Maine and across the nation," said Frank Schubert, the chief organizer for Stand for Marriage Maine, which lobbied for the repeal.

For the "gay rights movement," it was a stinging defeat. Same-sex marriage had been established by law in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Iowa, as well as Maine, by a court ruling, a legislative act, or both. But in 30 previous occasions when the question had been put to voters in referenda, "gay marriage" lost 30 times. Maine is number 31.

The decision, though short of a landslide, was still impressive. By all accounts, Stand for Marriage Maine had been outspent by organizations supporting same-sex marriage in their respective advertising campaigns. According to the *New York Times* last week, Stand for Marriage Maine had raised \$2.6 million, while its opponents had a war chest of more than \$4 million. According to the Associated Press the proponents of same-sex marriage, framing the issue as a matter of equality, had 8,000 volunteers working to get the message out. Many of them were from out of state. The Maine League of Women Voters, who put out a voters guide on referendum questions in this year's election, expressed support for "marriage equality" and recommended a "No" vote on Question 1.



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The proponents of homosexual and lesbian marriage had hoped the vote in Maine would mark the beginning of a comeback after last year's loss in the heavily publicized battle over Proposition 8 in California. The defenders of tradition in Maine lacked some of the advantages, including a large Mormon population, that helped the conservative coalition in California turn the tide against "gay marriage" there. They also lacked in this year's local elections the galvanizing effect of a presidential campaign to turn out voters. Last year, with Barack Obama, heading the Democratic ticket, culturally conservative African American and Latinos turned out in greater numbers than usual to help elect the first non-white President in U.S. history. Those factors were not present in the referendum campaign in Maine.

So instead of rolling back opposition to same-sex marriage, the vote in Maine may have encouraged it. In neighboring New Hampshire, where state lawmakers also passed a same-sex marriage law last spring, opponents of "gay marriage" have begun calling on the state's Legislature and Governor to allow voters in the Granite State the same chance Maine residents had to settle the question themselves.

"Thirty-one states, including Maine have now put this question to the people and in all 31 state the people have said 'no' to gay marriage," said Kevin Smith, director of Cornerstone Policy Research, the New Hampshire organization that led the fight against the new marriage law. "It is time to let the people vote by approving the constitutional amendment on this issue that will be introduced in the Legislature next year," Smith said in a Cornerstone press release. Smith urged New Hampshire residents to call or write their State Representatives and Senators and to call Governor John Lynch, who signed the "marriage equality" bill, at (603) 271-2121 and urge support of an amendment that will let the people decide the issue.

"This vote (in Maine) just goes to show how radical and out-of-touch the New Hampshire legislature and Governor Lynch are with the voters of New Hampshire, who if given the chance would also vote to reject gay marriage," Smith said. Smith also noted that next year is an election year for state offices and every seat in the Legislature and the one in the Governor's office will be up for election.

"It is time our elected officials listen to the people or we vote them out of office next November," Smith said.



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